†. 11853. f. 12.

AN ITALIAN WARNING TO THE BRITISH CRITIC,

OR AN

ELUCIDATION

OF THE

British Critic's Review

OF

MARIOTTINI's TRANSLATION

OF

PARADISE LOST.

Milton
Appendix

See No, X. being No. II. of Vol. III. published last Month.

Some neither can for Wits nor CRITICS pass;
As heavy MULES are neither Horse nor Ass.

POPE.

LONDON:

Printed by J. BARFIELD, No. 385, Oxford-Street,
For J. OWEN, No. 168, Piccadilly.

1794.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE.]

BRITISH MUSEUM

AN

ITALIAN WARNING

TO THE

BRITISH CRITIC.

THE love of my country, the honour of literature, and friendship, oblige me to enter the lists, and to become the professed champion of the TRANSLATOR of PARADISE LOST. I am certain that the Italians and English will be pleased with my defending a work which reflects so much lustre on both nations. Methinks I see the great shade of MILTON, who was so fond of Italy, and who was so much beloved there, smile on my attempt. I must beg the BRITISH CRITIC's pardon if there should happen to be any solecism in these lines. I hope he will not CRITICISE on this point, one, who for the first time writes in English, and has no other pretension than that of being UNDERSTOOD.

BRITISH CRITIC. ‘ The present is an attempt to ‘ recommend the British HOMER to the knowledge of ‘ Italian readers. If we may judge from the list of subscribers prefixed, the literati of Italy are laudably desirous to encourage every design that may familiarize ‘ the great poet, who, himself a lover of the Tuscan ‘ Muse, wrote while he was there, in the language of the ‘ country.’

ELUCIDATION. The better to clear up this point, it will be necessary to mention that all those whose names are in the list of the Italian subscribers, have only inserted them out of regard and kindness to the Translator. I can assert that they are all either his particular friends, or acquaintances. I know this glory is dear to him, and I am certain that he will be indebted to me for being, on this occasion, the herald of the gratitude that he owes to the illustrious country, and especially to his noble Romans. But those who wish to make Milton their own, gave for answer what the subscribers themselves would have replied, had they not been the Translator's friends: “ Either this translation is bad, and we do not chuse to “ put ourselves to an useless expence; or it is good, and “ ZATTA, of Venice, TERRES, of Naples, MASI, of Leg-“ horn, will immediately publish new editions of it in “ Italy, which will cost three, and perhaps four times “ less than the English one.”

B. C. ‘ It will not be forgotten by our readers, that ‘ MILTON has before had the honour of an Italian ‘ translator. The version of PAOLO ROLLI is now before ‘ us; it was dedicated to FREDERICK Prince of Wales, ‘ and makes a thin volume in folio. ROLLI did not ‘ judge like the present translator, of the efficacy of ‘ annotations. He gave merely the version of the poem,

in

' in *blank* verse, like the present. Mr. MARIOTTINI has
' been able to bring only *one* book of the Paradise Lost
' into his first volume; the rest is occupied by Prefaces,
' the life of Milon translated from Bp. Newton, all the
' *lights* that this country has thrown upon the poet and
' his poem; and what the translator, by no means in-
' curious or incompetent, has been able to add to the
' collection."

E. On seeing remarked with so much parade the honour that MILTON has already received, in an Italian translation by PAOLO ROLLI, I expected that one who assumes the MODEST title of *British Critic*, would have spoken with the knowledge of history, logick, and criticism, of the manner in which that translation was received by the English, on its publication, and of the esteem in which it is held at present by the Italians; I expected that the *British Critic* would have given a brief and masterly account of the faithfulness, elegance, and spirit of that translation, and that afterwards, like an able and judicious inspector, he would have made a splendid and short comparison of the same with the original text, and with the new translation; but my hopes, and those of all men of taste have been deceived. The *British Critic* does not trouble himself with these trifles which smell of the college minuteness and mean pedantry of schools. He has a head too much stuffed with exquisite and uncommon branches of knowledge, to descend to such minutiæ. He rather prefers to apply himself to higher objects, and with an accurate analysis expressed with a preciseness of ideas, and an economy of phrases at once elegant and learned, such in short that *It will not be forgotten by its readers*, informs all us uninformed mortals, that while he was BUSY in displaying on paper this highly sublime extract and his BRITANNO CRITICAL opinion on the new translation,

the

the version of PAOLO ROLLI *was before him,* that *it was* dedicated to FREDERICK Prince of Wales, that *it makes a thin volume in folio,* that ROLLI *did not judge like the present translator* of *the efficacy* of *annotations,* that *he gave merely the version of the poem, in blank verse, like the present.*

This is indeed *throwing all the* LIGHTS *upon* the *poet and* his *poem.* This is possessing the perfection of the art of Longinus, of Horace, of Boileau.—Bravo!—bravo! bravò! BRITISH CRITIC.

B.C. 'When a man candidly intimates the style of translation which he prefers, he offers a criterion by which 'his labours may be fairly judged, without rendering 'the critic liable to an imputation of desiring or demanding more than was meant to be performed. Our 'present translator thus describes perfection in his art. "V'ha finalmente di quelli, che, di ritrarre al vivo il "carrattere, e lo spirito dell' originale autore sforzandosi, *nulla aggiungono, nulla ommettono,* con arte "maestra adattano al soggetto lo stile, e la frondosa "e fruttifera arbore in istranio terreno felicemente "trapiantano." Pref. p. viii., "Finally, there are "those who, determined to express to the life, the "character and spirit of the original author, neither "add nor omit any thing, adapt, in a masterly manner, "the style to the subject, and happily transplant "the living tree with all its leaves and fruit into a "foreign soil."

'Such being the governing principles of the writer, 'it will be fair to try him by these laws, allowing for 'occasional lapses of inadvertence or mistake.'

E. I will afterwards examine in what manner the *British Critic* has endeavoured *to try* the translator by his own laws.

B. C. 'His reason for choosing the Verso sciolto, 'or blank verse, appears to be the consideration that 'rhyme forces the poet to forsake that' "simplicita e "natura, che e il solo e vero fonte del bello," "that "simplicity and nature which is the sole and true source "of beauty." 'Yet good blank verse he allows to be, 'in the opinion of many masters of the poetic art, the 'most difficult to produce. This is the case in English, 'as well as in Italian. Ordinary blank verse is written 'with ease from the simplicity of its rules, but excellent 'poems are much more rarely produced, when attempted 'in that measure, than in any other. In the present 'case, it seems a sufficient cause for the preference given 'to it by Signor Mariottini, that his author had chosen 'the same; for we hold that as far as the languages 'will admit of it, the measure of the translation should 'be similar to that of the original. It would have been 'absurd in a Roman to translate Homer in any measure, 'except the Hexameter.'

'Our translator seems to think, that modern languages, 'as they become refined, reject the shackles of rhyme. 'This we doubt, or rather deny. He may himself be 'best qualified to judge how far Italy is benefited by the 'refinement of the *Lombard* School, when he compares 'the productions of Ariosto and Tasso, with those of 'Rucellai and Algarotti.'

E. Here the *British Critic* has in great part misrepresented the translator's real sentiments by dismembering them, he makes him in some sort say what he did not mean, and forms a ridiculous mixture of the *Lombard School,*

School, of *Tasso*, *Ariosto*, *Rucellai*, *Algarotti*, &c. &c. To demonstrate the truth of my assertion, I shall do nothing else than give here a faithful translation of the note to which the British Critic alludes, and which is to be found in page 224. It seems to me to evince judgment and taste.

" Not only Bishop Burnet, but also Doctor Johnson " appears to disapprove the blank verse which Milton " has made use of. Then after having observed that " the English blank verse can hardly please, he hints " that Milton finding it easier to make blank verse, " endeavoured to persuade himself that it was better. " Johnson's opinion is very similar to that of Voltaire, " who affirms that those who have written in blank " verse, did it only because they could not rhyme, " since blank verse proceeds only from the inability of " getting over the difficulty and from the desire of " having sooner done. I hope that it will be permitted " to propose some reflections which may be perhaps " easily applied to the metre of all languages. Some " acute critics and philosophical enquirers give it as " their opinion, that rhyme was first invented merely " to help the memory, and at the same time to regulate " the measure, in singing and dancing, not because " it was essential to true poetry. In fact, the Greek " Poets, who according to many formerly wrote in " rhyme, afterwards omitted it when they came to " know the power of the copiousness, flexibility, ex- " pression, and harmony of their language, and they " perceived that rhyme in poetry is like paint on a lady's " cheek, and that although it sometimes makes up for " the artist's defects, it is never necessary for the per- " fection of the art. Homer's success and example suffices " for all. Vanquished Greece, which by transporting " the arts into Italy, subdued, as Horace says, the proud

" con-

" conqueror rendered in some degree the style
" and the mechanism of blank verse common to the
" Latins. And really this method seems well imagin
" ed; since the artifice of rhyme being manifest does
" not agree with the precept so difficult to follow, of
" the art of concealing art, with simplicity, and with
" nature, which is the only and true source of beauty;
" while on the contrary, Greek and Latin verse ap-
" proaches very near to nature, since the measure of
" the feet is in a certain manner hidden, and conveys
" to the ear, without pomp, that sudden and unob-
" served harmony, which pleasantly arises from it.
" Italians at first employed rhyme, and *Leonini* verse
" by some attributed to the benedictine Monk, LEONIO,
" and by others, to a certain Priest, Teodolo, who
" was contemporary with the Emperor ZENO, when,
" to express myself in the language of an illustrious
" writer, the intercourse with the Goths and Vandals
" spoiled the ear, and confused the pronunciation in
" such a manner, that they lost the perception of
" measure, of which the Ancients had the expression in
" their words, and the distinction in their ears."

" I am however, so far from thinking that the choice
" of blank verse proceeds in a writer from a difficulty
" and incapacity of finding rhymes, and from a desire
" of sooner compleating his work, that I am on the
" contrary of opinion, that good blank verse (I always
" mean Italian, since it does not belong to me to judge
" of others) is the most difficult of all, and in this, many
" of my friends in Italy who are skilled in poetry
" agreed with me. Rhyme in verse often supplies the
" place of imitative harmony, of the effervescence of
" imagination, of sublimity of thought: but the nature
" of blank verse deprived of this, though a frail support,
" must have the intrinsick merit of supporting itself with

" a har-

" a harmony derived only from the distribution and choice " of the words, and from certain ingenious undulations " and stops; with a fervency of enthusiasm which never " flags or diminishes, and with a majesty of sentiments " which always rises above vulgar meanness. Besides " I conceive that blank verse which allows the conve- " nient liberty of turning, suspending, or lengthening " the period at pleasure, and of intermixing images and " sentences at option, is more adapted to the character " of an inspired poet, who being possessed with celestial " fire, and teeming with impetuous raptures and con- " ceptions which he wishes to express in words, must " necessarily despise the servile shackles of rhyme " which curb the ardour of imagination, and take from " the copiousness of quick invention, and prescribes " with imperious bounds the limits to the spontaneous " flights of fancy, and to the energy of sentiment. " The unfettered poet always displays and paints his " thoughts with originality; the rhyming poet often " presents under languid colours the ideas, which are " suggested to him by a similar termination of words " that are to follow."

" Whoever wishes to know how many, and what " beauties are to be found in good Italian blank verse, " must read, and I am certain he will read it again " with fresh pleasure, the *Api* of *Rucellai*, the *Coltivazione* " of *Alamanni*, the *Canapajo* of *Baruffaldi*, the *Coltivazione* " *del riso* of *Spolverini*, the *Baco da seta* of *Betti*, and " so many other elegant and sublime poems, by *Frugoni*, " *Algarotti*, *Bettinelli*, and by la *vivente Scuola Lom-* " *barda*." (That is to say, *and by all the celebrated living writers in blank verse, the best of which in greatest number are by birth or residence of Lombardy.*)

B. C.

B. C. 'We have noticed in his criticisms some little 'spleen against Dr. Johnson. He is in doubt whether 'he shall style our great Critic "il Varr one della lingua "Inglese, or l'Aretino della letteratura." 'It is of 'little consequence now, and probably, when alive, 'it would not have been of much more to Johnson, what 'he was thought to be by the present writer. How-'ever, upon the gauntlet being thrown touching 'Fracini's Ode, our Italian, jealous for the credit of 'his native country, thus overwhelms the objection of 'Johnson.'

"After having modestly protested that he could not "pretend to speak as a critic of the Italian poetry of "Milton, Johnson, says our annotator, decides author-"itatively upon the poem of Francini, of which he affirms, "that the first stanza is *an empty sound.*" 'Here the 'worthy translator imagines himself sure of his mark, 'and he rises to display at once his own penetration 'and taste, aud confound empiricism and contradiction.'

'Alas! a very slender discernment, one should think, 'might suffice to teach a man, that the incapacity under-'stood, was not such a one as precluded his judgment 'upon the *thoughts* of either poet. Of the purity of 'Milton's Italian, Johnson could certainly not be a 'competent judge; of the meanness of Francini's in-'vocation, he certainly might; one assertion respected 'merely the collocation and concord of words, the 'other the weight or the levity of sentiments.'

E. I know how good and noble is the translator's heart. He has not, he cannot have any *spleen* against Dr. Johnson. On the contrary, he has the greatest respect and esteem for his very extensive and profound learning: though he may differ from him in several points, he gives the reason for such a difference of opi-

nions. I cannot conceive why the translator should be denied the same right which Dr. Johnson made use of with regard to all learned men, dead as well as alive, ancients as well as moderns. I will speak afterwards of the word ARETINO. It is probable that it is of *little consequence* what the translator thinks of some little particulars of Johnson, but it is *certain* that it is *of no consequence* what the *British Critic* thinks of the translator's essay.

I must be allowed to remark, that the *British Critic* purposely and unfairly translates only a part of the translator's note, that he gives it to be understood, that Johnson has confined his opinion only to the first stanza, and invocation of Francini's ode, that he relates as a *mark* of the translator what is only a preliminary to his *mark*, grounded upon the reasons which he afterwards alleges, that he makes metaphysical distinctions, and applies the word *incapacity* to a meaning which the translator never intended to give it. I believe I can no better shew in what an unaccountable manner the *British Critic* has misrepresented the translator's meaning than by giving here translated the note which refers to Francini's Ode, and which is to be found in page 204.

" Dr. Johnson after having modestly protested that he " could not pretend to speak as a critic of Milton's " Italian poetry, pronounces authoritatively upon Fran- " cini's Ode of which he affirms that the *first stanza* is " *only an empty noise, that the rest are perhaps too diffused* " *in common topicks, but that the last is natural and beautiful.* " I flatter myself it will not be imputed to me as a " proof of immoderate pride, if in a question belonging " to the Italian Literature, I dare blame Johnson's " judgment. CORREGGIO said in a similar occasion, " Son Pittor anch'io. (I too am a Painter.) I say then " that Francini's Ode is certainly not such as could be

" com-

" compared to those of *Chiabrera* and *Guidi*, rivals of
" Pindar, or to those of *Testi*, and *Filicaja*, imitators of
" Horace. I maintain however, that it has a great share
" of poetic merit. A sufficient choice of words and no-
" ble sentiments, a moderate and proper use of metaphors,
" similes, ingenious allusions to history and fable, some
" expressions of the Latin Classics happily translated,
" a certain feeling and transport of friendship and ad-
" miration, which is enthusiasm, or something much
" resembling it. Is not all this enough for an Ode?
" for an Ode, particularly the subject of which is a
" traveller, then but a young man, not yet celebrated
" for extraordinary merit, not distinguished by his birth,
" not secretary to Cromwell, not the defender of the
" English Rights, not the author of Paradise Lost, to
" whom the kind Tuscan was desirous of offering a
" mark of affection and esteem? Must he needs begin
" and continue with the *ton* of that poet rightly repre-
" hended by the swan of Venusium *Fortunam Priami*
" *cantabo*, et *nobile bellum*? I know myself that Francini's
" Ode, examined according to the severe precepts of
" art, has some faults, but his real faults have not been
" remarked by the dogmatic Johnson who has found
" imaginary faults. Let the opinion he gives of the first
" stanza, which he calls but an *empty noise*, serve as an
" example. 'Tis a strange opinion! the first stanza is a
" living invocation which the poet addresses to Clio. A
" *living invocation* is not *an empty noise*, if we are not to give
" the appellation of an empty noise to the beginnings of
" almost all Epic Poems, not excepting the Iliad. But
" the living invocation of Francini far from being an
" empty noise is an invocation full of nobleness, and artifice.
" I say full of nobleness, because the Poet disdaining
" the accustomed laurel, begs the muse to grant him a

sup-

" support, which may be suited to the new crown that " he proposes to weave more flattering than that which " Appollo commonly bestows. I say full of artifice, be- " cause in this manner the poet excites the wonder, and " prepares the attention of the reader, who is curious to " know, and expects great things. And perhaps in the " above mentioned ode on a mean subject, this is one of " the real faults that have escaped the penetration of the " English Critic."

" I should laugh in observing that Johnson, who has " always been a free dispenser of blame, precisely praises " Francini for the very thing which he should be repre- " hended. What Italian of judgment and taste, either " criticising or neglecting all the stanza of this said ode, " would fix his attention upon, and admire the last, and " call it in preference to the others, *natural* and *beautiful*? " Which of the most passionate admirers of Father Giug- " lari's Sermons, or of Loredano Letters, would dare to " praise this swelled improper, and therefore neither " natural, nor beautiful manner of expressing himself,"

" Freno dunque la lingua e ascolto il core,
" Che ti prende a lodar collo stupore."

That is to say, " *I bridle then my tongue, hand I ear my* " *heart which undertakes to praise thee with astonishment.*"

" Here I think it is proper to make a reflection, which if " I am not mistaken, may be useful to young scholars, " who are easily deceived by the authority of names, and " follow without examining all the theorems, and all the " opinions, which in speaking or writing, are propagated " by the supposed oracles of science, and by the usurpers " of literary supremacy. Let us suppose that Johnson's " bitter criticism on Francini's ode, were reasonable and " well grounded, but let me ask; would it be sufficient to " give it the appellation of a bad one? No, Doctor John-

" son

" son. An ode in whatever language it be written, but " especially in one truly poetical, and different from the " language of prose, though it be but *una bagatella canora*, " which is the same thing as *only empty noise*, though it be " written on the common topicks of the art, though sen- " timental parade, and extraordinary thoughts be wanting, " it may nevertheless be a very charming ode with re- " spect to elegance, choice of words, variety of harmony, " simplicity of feeling, turns of original humour, a certain " happy negligence, and particularly that grace, which is " the daughter of nature, the companion of truth, which " suddenly disappears from those who labour to attain it, " and which by a kind of charm always makes amends " for the want of wit and sentiment. I could produce a " thousand examples of much celebrated odes of this kind, " but it will be sufficient to recal the first ode of Anacreon " to his lyre; Horace's ode to the fountain of Ban- " dusium; the inimitable *Canzone* of Petrarca, which be- " gins, *Chiare fresche e dolci acque*, &c. and that of the " Abbe de Chaulieu, to his Villa of Fontenay."

Before I proceed, I must warn the *British Critic* that, since he has so much veneration for every little particular of Dr. Johnson, and believes him to be infallible in every thing, he ought instead of *empiricism* and boasting, and according to the duties and glory suitable to such a passionate admirer of the Doctor: he ought, I say, to examine, and calmly confute the reasons which the translator thought he had for dissenting from the same in many places of his annotations, and especially in pages 110, 113, 117. Why did not the *British Critic* do so? did he do it purposely, or through *inability?*

B. C. ' But to put the credit of Milton's Italian verse ' upon its proper base, Baretti was the man who com- ' mended it to Johnson, and who himself selected it a- " mong

'mong his flowers of Italian composition. Since its 'purity or impurity are to rest upon opinion, the reader 'may balance the approbation of Baretti against the cen-'sure of Mariottini.'

E. I care not whether Baretti was the person who commended to Dr. Johnson the Italian poetry of Milton, and whether he selected it for the Italian flowers as a compliment to the English Nation. I do not like to trouble the ashes of the dead, but I must say, that whatever may be Baretti's reputation in England, relative to Italian literature, it is certain that Italy never had any particular esteem for Baretti. When he set off from Italy, no body knew that Baretti had ever read a book, and very few knew that he existed. Perhaps after his arrival, and during so long a stay in England, he became skilled in Italian literature; but yet after that period, Baretti, as a man of learning, is only known in Italy by a little work, which the celebrated Philologus, and a poet still living, Father *Abbot* Bonafede wrote against him, to convict him of ignorance and bad taste. The title of the book is *Il Bue Pedagogo*. Some might say that Baretti is known in Italy for his Dictionary also, but I must remark that his Dictionary is almost intirely taken, or in a very large part, from Altiers's Dictionary, and men of taste say, that Baretti's Dictionary, if it can be on any account called a good one, is good only because it is the best, though a bad Dictionary. But the present translator of Milton, whatever the *British Critic* may think of him, is particularly known for many of his Essays, and he is highly spoken of by the literary *Giornali* of Italy, and especially by the *Effemeridi Letterarie*, by the *Analisi Ragionata de librinuovi* and by the *Giornale* de *Letterati*. Besides Mr. Signorelli, secretary to the Royal Academy of Naples, in the supplement to his esteemed work on the *vicende della coltura*

della

della Sicilia and precisely in the *prospectus* of the eighteenth century speaking of the best Italian writers, who do honour to the present age, has also mentioned the translator's name, F. MARIOTTINI *per dilicatezza, e gusto di lingua inarrivabile, (inimitable for delicacy and taste of Italian language.)*

But we are not now to weight the two authorities, one of which praises and the other blames Milton's compositions. The translator has assigned his reasons for thinking that he ought not to be partial to them, and if the *British Critic* would act according to his name, he should either confute, or at least slightly examine the reasons alledged by the translator to maintain his assertion, instead of writing in a manner which shews his *incapacity* understood in the true and extensive and not in the metaphorical and limited sense: *since its purity, or impurity are to rest upon opinion.*

To enable the reader to judge for himself on this subject, I will supply what is wanting in the *British Critic* by giving in English the translator's note, which is to be found in page 81. "Doctor Johnson "also affirms that he has heard Milton's Italian compo- "sitions commended by one who was very able to "judge of their merit. I am however very sorry that "I cannot confirm the praise that the Academicians of "*la Crusca* bestowed as a compliment on a foreigner, "and which Johnson's friend repeated either from habit "or ignorance. Nor must this be ascribed as a fault to "the poet, since few even of the natives themselves are "able to discern all the elegance, refinement, and the "various modifications of the language, and of the "poetry. Five *Italians Sonetti* are printed among his "works and a short *canzone* which I have not quite "comprehended. It appears that he endeavoured to "imitate PETRARCA's style, and I could lay a wager,

" that in writing the Sonnet to DIODATI, he had in view
" that of PETRARCA, which begins, *S'enuccio i' vo', che*
" *sappi in qual maniera*, &c. The distribution of his
" *quadernari*, and *terzine* is generally laboured in regard
" to the junction and division of the fourteen verses,
" and to the termination of periods. GIOVANNI DELLA
" CASA, and ANGELO DI COSTANZO, two great Sonnet
" writers, did sometimes the same: but that happy com-
" bination and turn shews in them a facility of expression
" copiousness and precision of thoughts. But in Milton
" indicates the labour, and dearth of a foreigner and a
" beginner. *Incerar gli orecchi*, il *sospiro, che trova luogo*
" *negli occhi, e fa tutte le notti piovose, giovane piano*, il
" *gran Mondo, che rugge*, l' ago *insanabile d' amore*, &c.
" (That is to say in plain English: *to wax the ears*,
" (to stop the ears) the *sight that finds place in the eyes*,
" *and renders all the* NIGHTS RAINY, *the plain young man*,
" the great *world which* ROARS, *the incurable* NEEDLE
" of LOVE, &c.) are either vulgar expressions or meta-
" phors worthy only of Achillini.

' B. C. A disposition has latterly displayed itself,
' to comment, with petulant severity, upon the mind,
' the acquirements, and the criticism of Johnson. He
' is no more. No man elicited more deference when
' living; his powers were superior to all contest. He
' has left his opinions to defend themselves, and the
' herd of minor geniuses rejoice that the period of their
' dismay is past. Whilst he lived,'

" Safest was he who stood aloof,
" When insupportably his foot advanc'd."

' With what propriety Mariottini terms the pious
' doctor the Aretino of our literature, (we suppose he
' means

'means that Johnson depreciates authors, as that satyrist 'did characters in general) may be best demonstrated 'by the following epigram upon that profligate cha-'racter.'

"Qui giace l'ARETIN Poeta Tosco,
"Che d'ognun disse malo, che de Dio,
"Scusandosi col dir;"—"Io no'l conosco."

'As it is impossible for the inveterate enemy of 'Johnson, to point out one passage, in which he has 'abused his great powers by carrying them to the 'support of irreligious doctrines; we think it very 'wrong, on any account, to compare him to a man, 'among whose chief characteristics were vice and im-'piety. We have said the more upon this subject, 'because we should be concerned that any erroneous 'ideas of so great a man, whose life and merits deserve 'to be the objects of universal reverence, were trans-'mitted into another land.'

E. The beginning of this passage *Cicero—Catilinarian* of the *British Critic* relates to the English Literati, who are not blind admirers of every expression of Johnson. It behoves them to justify themselves to the tribunal of the upright and real judge called the BRITISH CRITIC, from which tribunal there is no APPEAL. I now proceed to the word ARETINO, about which he says so much. It is really misrepresenting the translator's intentions to give this expression such a meaning as to injure the moral character of Dr. Johnson, to whom I am certain that the translator has not made nor meant to make the slightest allusion. And if it will give the *British Critic* pleasure, I am sure the translator will not be against calling, and owning Dr. Johnson to be not only the *pious Doctor,*

Doctor, but even a *saint*. This has nothing to do with literary works, and discussions. It was therefore unnecessary for the *British Critic* to inveigh mal a propos against *the profligate character* of Aretino, and to MANGLE that Italian epigram.

Aretino della Letteratura may signify, as the *British Critic* has observed in the note, that *Johnson depreciates authors as that* satyrist *did characters in general*, and this may in part be proved by reading the work of the worthy Mr. Boswell, who *compiles, compiles, compiles*, and by dint of *compiling* so many particulars, trifles, and bon mots of Dr. Johnson, has almost succeeded in proving that his dear friend was very often inclined to make uncivil epigrams, not sparing his best friends even Mr. Boswell himself,

Aretino della Letteratura in the obvious and natural signification and in the only one meant by the translator indicates a man who in literature enjoys the same pre-eminence in respect, fear, and veneration, on account of his knowledge, criticism, manner of expressing it with all the precision of logick, with all the flowers of eloquence, with all the strokes of a penetrating mind, for which reason *the herd of minor geniuses* feel *their dismay*, the same pre-eminence, I say, which Aretino enjoyed in the literary and polite world, on account of his audacious style, and of his satyrical and impertinent manners, and to whom not only literati but even the most powerful monarchs of Europe paid homage, and sent magnificent presents in order to gain his approbation.

In this signification, which is the true obvious and natural meaning of the Italian expression, and of the translator who made use of it, far from depreciating Dr. Johnson's religious and moral character, it pompously magnifies his critico-literary reputation. Upon my honour the *British Critic* may console himself, and

need

need not fear that from the translator's expression *any erroneous idea of so great a man* should be introduced and propagated in Italy. The assertion of one who understands the force, and meaning of the Italian expressions, and the known probity of the translator will be better securities to him than his fiery and untimely apology, since I do not know if the *British Critic will be transmitted into another land*, and perhaps it would be better for his fame, if that should not happen.

B. C. 'The translator has literally rendered the commentaries of Addison upon Paradise Lost, and, *undè supervenit undam*, we are presented with his own commentaries upon those.—We do not here discover any profundity of remark; and the panegyric as well as the *animadversion* of JOHNSON upon this *divine* poem, in splendor and acumen are still superior to all competition. Having discussed with sufficient amplitude the supplemental parts of the work, we now come to survey the accuracy and beauty of the translation of Paradise Lost.'

E. It seems ridiculous that a *British Critic* should expect to find *profundity of remark*, in a *Foreign Writer*, who does not chuse to copy others, nor to give under another form the thoughts of others, I say in a *Foreign Writer*, who ventures to make some observations on a poem which has been illustrated with commentaries and notes by the first and most learned *British* classical Authors, (not *Critics.*) Nevertheless I allow the Translator's new illustrations to have their merit, and I think them much superior to the modest title that he had given them in his preface, page x. *alcune mie forse inutili annotazioni unendo*, that is to say, *adding some of my* perhaps *useless annotations to the life of Milton, to the observations of Addison, and to each book of the Poem.*

B. C.

B. C. 'Without examining into the necessity for simplicity in the Epic exordium, it is sufficient to say, *that* 'of the poem before us is as simple as piety itself could 'enjoin to the paraphrast upon Genesis:'

"Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
"Of that forbidden tree, &c."

'What force or beauty this can acquire from the epithet *Malgustato* applied to fruit, we must leave Italian 'readers to discover.'

E. Yes, Sir. I who am an *Italian reader*, and what is more (whether good or bad) an *Italian Author*, I will shew with what *force* and *beauty* the epithet MALGUSTATO is here applied to the *fruit*. Pay attention, *Mr. British Critic*, for now I begin to enter my own province.

Malgustato is a word composed of *male* and *gustato*, and I believe that it has been for the first time used in the Italian language. At least I cannot quote any other example. It seems nevertheless to me to be a word so happily composed, that I wish I had been the first to say it. It is in the Latin manner as the *malesuada fames* of Virgil. And the Italian language which is derived from the latin, affords other examples of it in the words *malagiato, malmenato, &c.*

Malgustato is here an epithet opportunely applied to fruit, since immediately it brings to mind the evils that the tasting of this *forbidden* fruit brought upon us.

Malgustato in short, is an epithet which expresses the spirit and word of Milton in this place. Milton with an immediate reference to the fruit adds, *whose mortal taste brought death into the world*, However, as in Italian we cannot

cannot say, il *mortal* gusto portò la *morte*, therefore the ingenious Translator has happily, and in a masterly manner, changed the English, *mortal taste*, of Milton, in the Italian epithet, *malgustato*, applied to fruit.

B. C. ' The translator is too frequently addicted to ' amplification—thus, for instance, when he mentions'

" Siloa's brook that flow'd
" Fast by the *Oracle* of God,"

he extends it to

" Che il sacro irriga
" Dai *responsi* del Nume *illustre* Tempio."

E. Now at last the *British Critic* seats himself majestically on the trisod of the Delphian Apollo, and begins to deal out poetical oracles. But let the *British Critic* recollect that those who delivered Oracles from the tripod, were Priestesses, not *Priests*, not PARR-*sons*. And if he were to continue too long on it, he might share the fate of Marsyas.

Dai *responsi* del Nume *illustre* tempio.

Is not so much an amplification as an illustration of the original text of Milton. If the *British Critic* had attentively read the translator's preface, he would have seen that what he aimed at in his translation was, to render the poem quite *chiaro* ed *intelligible* (clear and intelligible) *agl' Italiani*.

I could wish that the *British Critic* would tell me freely, how many, even among the English of some education and knowledge could on the first perusal, and without the pre-

previous help of commentaries, comprehend what Milton meant by the words, *by Oracle.*

I own that neither in Milton, nor in Rolli, who translated literally,

O il ruscel di siloe, che presso scorse
All' Oracol di Dio

Could I understand what that signified: and I understood it well only when with the aid of a note I found, that *Siloa* was a Brook which flowed near the *Temple* of Jerusalem, where God delivered his *oracles.*

Therefore our Translator with much judgment, and in order to render this passage *intelligible,* without commentaries, in the first perusal gives us to understand, that this Brook flowed near the temple *illustre,* that is, *famous, celebrated,* and *known* for the *responsi del Nume,* (a noble latin word judiciously introduced into Italian) that is, for the *Oracles of God.*

The patient reader will pardon me for descending to the pedantry of a grammatical School Master. What have I to do with it? The British Critic has the edifying humility of chusing to appear a School-Boy.

But for your misfortune and mine, courteous readers, the childish lesson is not yet finished.

B. C. ' The sublime adjuration to the Holy Spirit, ' majestic from its awful brevity, is, either from poverty ' of feeling, or vanity of phrase, thus unaccountably ' expanded.

' Tu sii lo mio *Maestro* e'l mio *Autore ;*
' Mi metti dentro alle *segrete cose.*
' E chiaro fammi quel, che *altrui si serra.*

With

'With our present poetical sensations, we do not think 'all this worth the tithe of the poet's single idea,'

"Instruct me for THOU knowest."

'ROLLI, in the translation above quoted, has rendered it literally,'

"Istruiscime tu, perche tu sai,"

'and, if we did not fear incurring, with Johnson, the 'charge of *empiricism*, we should say, we wish M. Mari- 'ottini had done the same:—as it is, the lines refer to 'nothing in the poem.'

E. *No poverty of feeling*, or *vanity of phrase*, has induced the translator to *thus unaccountably expand* the *instruct me for thou knowest*, and to hurt the *present poetical sensations* of the *British Critic*. Our translator has been led to do it from the profound veneration that he, as well as all learned Italians, has for the GREAT FATHER of Italian poetry DANTE, to whom (*to instruct* the BRITISH CRITIC, for he DOES NOT KNOW) the two first of the three verses belong. Besides it is not true that *the lines refer to nothing in the Poem*. On the contrary, I think that they render Milton's meaning with the sublime language and elevated DANTESCA expression. In fact the *Maestro* and *Autore* are those who *instruct*, and they do *instruct* (*col mettere*) by introducing the disciple (*nelle secrete cose*) into the secret things. And it appears that the more Milton's meaning is explained in praying the Holy Ghost to render *Chiaro* to the poet, *quel che altrui si serra* (that is, that which being hidden to all others is known only to him) which in a figurative and dignified stile is the same as Milton's *for thou knowest*.

The *British Critic* could wish that the new translator had rendered simply as ROLLI.

Istruiscimi tu perche tu sai.

I will endeavour to enter into the translator's thoughts, and opposing the *British Critic's* inconsiderate desire, try to guess at the well grounded reasons for which the translator has not chosen to follow this example.

In the first place, whoever has any ear for harmony finds that this verse of Rolli is more adapted to the jew's-harp than to the epic trumpet.

Secondly, the words are neither expressive, proper, nor elegant, such as ought to be found in an Heroic Poem, and especially in the splendid and rapturous invocation that the poet here makes to the Holy Ghost.

Istruiscimi tu. Instruire is a verb of which good Italian writers have seldom made use even in common prose. I have no books at hand, I not chuse to go now to seek for any to consult, but if I remember right VARCHI is one among the few writers and perhaps the only one who can be quoted for having employed it in the ERCOLANO. We often make use of him in common conversation, and we say *Instruire* children in grammar, &c. I will not obstinately insist upon it, but I think I can almost affirm that no Italian poet has ever used in any poetical composition a verb which the *British Critic* wishes that the translator of Milton had employed in such a beautiful passage. I have just recollected a verse of Ariosto, but I do not know in what *canto* it is

Gli altri chi a *piedi*, e *chi a cavallo instrutti.*

But

But even the use which in this place, and signification the Ferrarese Homer makes of it sufficiently proves how improperly the verb *instruire* would be applied to the instruction that Milton prays from the Holy Ghost.

The POICHE TU SAI of Rolli does not in any manner express the FOR THOU KNOWEST of Milton with which the poet means to indicate that science which contemplates and comprehends the cause and effects of all things. The verb SAPERE in Italian merely signifies the knowledge of one particular thing by means of one's reason or experience. Precisely in this sense *Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio* have used this verb, as the *British Critic* may see in the famous dictionary of *la Crusca* with the perusal of which he ought in the mean time to occupy himself seriously, in order to be able to make *critical* and not *absurd* comparisons.

B. C. 'When, further on, MILTON weighing his 'powers against the theme, invokes the divine energy 'to strengthen them for the work,'

"What is low, raise and support."

'Instead of referring this to the frailty of nature, 'and the feebleness of mind, to expaciate over and to 'seize so vast a subject, the translator is thinking only 'about *style*; for he says,'

"E rendi il basso stil *terso* e *sublime*."

E. If the *British Critic* had acted fairly, and to the verse he quoted had added that other very beautiful one which preceeds it,

Deh! la mia notte di tua luce sgombra,

he would surely not have written that the translator looses sight of the *frailty of nature*, and the *feebleness of mind* to *expatiate over and seize so vast a subject, and is thinking only about style.*

The translator in this beautiful verse thought he had expressed all that Milton has said in the words,

What in me is dark
Illumin, what is low raise, and support,

all of which have an allegorical allusion to the faculties of the mind. Therefore the translator to avoid repeating in other Italian words the same, or at least not a very different thing has elegantly turned the *what is low raise and support* of Milton into the manner of managing with sublimity of verse his great subject which in substance is the only and true object of the whole invocation that the poet makes. And if Milton has not clearly expressed the precise idea of the translator, certainly he has not excluded it, on the contrary, he has evidently indicated it, since a few lines back he says *sing* heavenly muse, and lower down: Invoke *thy aid* to my adventrous *song*. Besides I could almost venture to say that Milton in his invocation had in view that which Tasso makes in the beginning of his *Jerusalem Delivered*, where after having begged the muse of heaven to infuse into his breast celestial flames, he adds,

Tu rischiara il mio canto, &c.

I more-

I moreover find great beauty in the manner in which the translator has expressed himself imitating the particular expression of Dante,

Lo bello stile, che m' ha fatto onore,

and that of Petrarca,

Ne dir d' amore in *stili alti e leggiadri*.

B. C. 'He sometimes analysis a compound appellative. The Omnipotent is usually "Colui' che *tutto puote*." Rolli thought an Italian ear might bear l'OMNIPOTENTE.'

"Chi oso sfidar l'Omnipotente all' armi."

E. I will display the various, and very just reasons for which the translator has not chosen to make use of the word ONNIPOTENTE which *Rolli thought an Italian ear might bear.*

First, Because a few lines back the translator had said *Onnipotenza*. And in a kind of poetry without rhymes he would not immediately after employ the word *Onnipotente* which has a similar termination.

Second, Because the word *Onnipotente* is a word rendered inelegant by the common use, which polite people as well as vulgar make of it in ordinary conversation.

Third, Because the classical poets have seldom if ever employed it, and I can almost assert that no example of it is to be found either in Dante or Petrarca.]

Fourth,

Fourth. Because this word has not quite a pleasant sound, and is not very easily pronounced, which proceeds not only from the syllables *on*, *ni*, but more from the other two, which begin with the same consonant, and have almost the same termination *ten*, *te*. Therefore I think it was that Dante, and Petrarca have chosen to write *possente* rather than *potente*, and for the same reason the translator when he had employed the word which the *British Critic* seems to approve of and to recommend, preferred *Onnipossente* to *Onnipotente*.

Fifth, Because the *analysis* of this *compound appellative* ONNIPOTENTE in Colui, che TUTTO PUOTE is a very proper and refined imitation of that beautiful expression of Dante,

La gloria di *colui*, che *tutto muove*,

In the last place, because the word *puote* instead of *puo* is well chosen and poetical, and has been often elegantly employed by the Author of the *Divina Commedia*.

It is true that the *British Critic* cannot be acquainted with all the refinements of the Italian language and art, and I am not so unthinking as to require of him so much knowledge of foreign literature: but on the other hand it is true, the *British Critic* who has not sufficient learning to judge rightly of the translation of the Paradise Lost must lay down the authoritative *literary—magistracy*, and be *modest* and *diffident* in CRITICISING.

B. C. 'Mariottini obviously thinks differently; 'otherwise, borrowing, as he has done, one half the line 'from Rolli, he might have also taken the other; but we 'observe, he seldom draws more than half lines from the 'former

'former translator: these are not difficult to find in no 'inconsiderable numbers, even in the first book.'

E. The Translator has not taken *half* the *line* from Rolli, but has really taken and translated the two words from Milton, *osò sfidar*, is literally, the *durst defy*. He may have done the same on other occasions, when he has thought that a literal translation of the English words would express with propriety force and elegance in Italian the sense and spirit of the Author. However, if the *British Critic*, by the words, *but we observe*, he seldom *draws more than half lines from the former translator, these are not difficult to find in no inconsiderable numbers, even in the first book*, means, as the ironical turn of the words seems to announce, that the new Translator independently of the clear and real expressions of the original, takes and borrows *half lines in no inconsiderable number*, from Rolli, the BRITISH CRITIC must excuse me, if I am obliged to say, and maintain, that he is a CALUMNIATOR.

I will add, that if I were the Translator, and an Italian of taste in poetry were to say to me; you translated better than Rolli, I should think he did me an injury. So wide is the difference which I discover in the spirit, vigour, sublimity, and colouring of the modern translation compared with the ancient. It is the oak compared to the reed; it is *Hercules's* CLUB compared to the PEN of the *British Critic*.

If any one should wish to see some passages of them compared, he may read the first number of the *Magazzino, Letterario Italico*, printed in London.

If what I have been told be true, as I think it is, this periodical work, in which with the deserved praises for elegance and sublimity the present translation is spoken of, is written by Mr. Polidori, Professor of the Italian lan-

language and literature, and it is evident from his extracts, that he is skilled in his profession. I know that in the said extract, among flattering praises, there are some slight criticisms; but as the Translator in his preface, has promised to answer and to profit by candid animadversions, I leave to him the task of answering these, as well as those of other *liberal* Italian or English (not *British*) Reviewers.

B. C. ' Our readers, from the above slight specimen, ' see of what nature are the defects of this translator. ' There now remains a far more agreeable task to dis- ' charge, namely, to point out passages, where, thorough- ' ly informed with the poet's spirit, and glowing from ' the effect of his harmonious number, he faithfully ' and majestically gives us the *soul* and *body* of the poet ' together; such is the sublime representation of Satan, ' from which our conception is as perfect as from that ' in the English poet.'

" Ei fra lor di persona e portamento,
" Maestevol', erto, torreggiante sta:
" Parte del lume antico il volto serba:
" Fra il tenebror raggio di gloria appare,
" Ed han maestà le sue ruine istesse."

' See MILTON, V. 590—4. The eclipse, that' " *with* " *fear of change perplexes monarchs*," ' is finely rendered.'

" O quale e allora, che per l'interposto
" Della sorella sua massivo corpo
" La Terra adombra, e nunzio di sciagure
" Fa tremare i TIRANNI, e star *pensosi*,"

E. *Slight*

E. *Slight specimen indeed,* as we have seen, *to see the defects of this translator.* However, I must confess, that the manner in which the *British Critic* expresses himself in praising the examples that he quotes, is flattering, and shews that he has been transported on reading them. But he might have selected them with more judgment from many pages of the translation. I refer especially to the second example, which in the opinion of some is liable to exception.

Among the different new words that the translator has happily inserted in his work, and which will certainly be considered as embellishing the Italian language, the word *massivo* is the only one about which some doubt is expressed in the above mentioned *magazzino.* I shall wait till I see what the translator thinks of it.

Besides that beautiful verse

Fa tremare i *tiranni* e *star pensosi,*

not as a plagiarism, but as happily chosen and wonderfully expressive of Milton's meaning was selected by the translator from Petrarca, who wrote

Fà tremar Babilonia e star pensosa.

Therefore no other praise is due to the translator than that of having well adapted it.

Moreover I have heard some blame the word *tiranni,* which the translator has changed in the verse of Petrarca, and which does not seem to them to render the word *monarchs,* which Milton has employed.

But notwithstanding, I must be allowed to observe, that those critics resemble the *British Critic,* since the word *tiranni* may very properly be said to express the word

monarchs of Milton. I shall not mention that MACHIAVELLI, a classical Italian writer, has used this word in the same signification. The translator does not stand in need of any Italian authority, if he chuses to say that he has employed this word in the original Greek signification of King or Monarch, or in the Latin one found in Virgil, in the VIIth book of the Eneid, where this word is applied by Latinus even to the pious Eneas,

Pars mihi pacis erit dextram tetigisse *Tyranni*,

E. C. 'We shall wait with some impatience the appearance of the subsequent volumes, and trust that, profiting by friendly criticism, the translator will there employ less amplification, and unsuitable prettiness; for such things, though adapted to the Italian taste, are not in the manner of MILTON, and convey a false impression of his genius and judgment. We hope and expect, from the powerful ability really possessed by the translator, that the Paradiso Perduto of MARIOTTINI may extend among his countrymen, at the same time his own fame, and that of MILTON.'

E. *Amplification* which displays itself in noble metaphors, and images, source of poetic beauty: *amplification*, which either illustrates, or embelishes a sentiment has been properly employed by all the epic poets, Homer, Virgil, Tasso, Milton, and it is not astonishing, on the contrary, it is praise worthy in our translator to have used it. The more so, because certain ornaments which do not suit a kind of metre, more regular and chaste, are properly employed in Italian blank verse, to the nature of which this sort of ornamental beauty is not only adapted, but also absolutely necessary in order to arrange

the

the pauses, to avoid monotony, to vary the turns, and always to render the verses agreeable to the ear by a change of sounds and imitative harmony.

Amplification, and unsuitable prettiness, in signification the *British Critic* gives to these words, not only as he justly observes, are not in *the manner* of *Milton*, and *convey a false impression of his genius* and *judgment*, but I can truly assure him, that they are not *adapted to the Italian taste* as he wrongly imagines.

If the *British Critic* had added to the reproach of *amplification* and *unsuitable prettiness*, quotations of particular passages in the translation, I could have answered them at length: as he has not done so, I cannot guess at them. In the mean time I inform the *British Critic*, that I am ready to demonstrate to him, that in this translation are no passages which I, according to the rules of good taste, cannot defend against his pedantic imputation. If in the translation there be any short passage that seem *pretty*, when compared with the original, it is certainly not where Milton is sententious and sublime. The first example that the *British Critic* cites, is a proof of it.

Since the *British Critic* desires the translator to profit by his *friendly criticism*, I desire him to profit by my *friendly advice*; if he proposes to review the *subsequent volumes*, which he waits for with *some impatience*, let him attentively read, or reperuse Locke, Longinus, and Horace, in order to furnish his mind with good principles of logic, and taste—let him read, and *understand*, the Italian grammarians and poets, that he may familiarise himself with the propriety and force of words, and the refinement and sublimity of elocution—let him read, or reperuse, Cicero *de officis*, that he may learn urbanity, politeness, equanimity, and that justice which is of no party, which is not governed by little motives, and mean passions, and which does not swear to the words of any man, even of a Doctor,

But

But if the *British Critic* wishes to distinguish himself by the particular attribute (that some call *obstinacy*) of the HERO of Apuleius, and will not listen to my *friendly advice*, I will then take the liberty of giving him another piece of *advice* still *more friendly*, and more adapted to his own character: let him change the title of BRITISH CRITIC to that of BRITISH NONSENSE.

The edition will be comprised in Five Volumes, Octavo, each Volume Eight Shillings, and Twelve Shillings on fine Paper, Hot-pressed, in Boards. The Price will be advanced Two Shillings and Sixpence each Volume, after the Publication of the Second Volume. Subscribers Names are received by Mr. MOLINI, No. 14, Hanover-Street; Mr. MATHEWS, No. 18, Strand; Mr. W. RICHARDSON, Royal Exchange; Mr. J. DE BOFFE, Gerard-Street, Soho; and E. BOOKER, No. 56, New Bond-Street.

BRITISH MUSEUM 21 JY99

FINIS.